



Ref: 13650.00

Noreen H. Stockman  
Staff Assistant for the Zoning Board of Appeals and Housing Partnership  
Town of Weston  
P.O. Box 378  
Weston, MA 02493

Re: Landscape Architecture Review  
269 North Avenue

Dear Ms. Stockman:

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) has completed a review of the Landscape Screening Plan dated 1112-2016, in conjunction with additional back-up materials including revised submission materials dated 12-28-2016, for the proposed multi-family residential development located at 269 North Avenue in Weston.

VHB reviewed the following documents prepared in support of the application:

Drawing L1.0 rev6 -Landscape Screening Plan

Drawing C1.00 -Site Preparation Plan

Drawing EX-1 - Building Setbacks and Offsite Trees

Memorandum – Tree Protection

C series drawings updated 12-28-2016: C0.00, C1.00, C2.00, C3.00, C4.00

**Site Preparation Plan and Tree Protection Detail** (Comments to be provided by DEI)

1. Recommend clear indication on the Site Preparation Plan of which trees within the site and along the property line are to be protected and remain, typically shown by X-ing out trees to be removed, and circling trees to remain. The note on the Drawing related to identification of trees to remain, and stating that the significant trees to remain will be further identified on the Landscape plan still leaves many gray areas. A site preparation contractor will not necessarily look at the final planting plans. And while the dashed boundary of the wastewater field and related note on the Site Preparation plan, and the text of the memorandum from Beveridge and Diamond, state that all trees at the front of the site will be removed, and all trees at the back will

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remain, there are trees outside of the dashed wastewater boundary, including along the property lines and in areas not disturbed by grading that ideally would remain. Specifically:

- A. There are several trees near the upper end of the eastern haybale line, outside of the dashed wastewater line but in an area undisturbed by grading. These large trees ideally would be protected and remain. These are a 30" tree, 2x6" trees, and a 12" tree.
  - B. The proposed 'Diversion Swale' between the wastewater system and the developed area is routed through the boundary indicating trees that will remain. There are several existing large trees in this area, especially along the 146 contour, that would ideally remain, and that are indicated as remaining on Drawing L1.0. But all are not within the dashed waste water boundary, and it is not clear what disturbance the diversion swale will create. Is it cutting into the grade, or formed on top of it? Clarify treatment of trees within the swale.
2. Tree protection detail: This detail does not seem adequate to address protection of trees to remain, especially since the detail appears to indicate a tree protection fence at the drip line, but none is called out or referred to, and many of the trees do not have a wide canopy to define a protection zone. The detail does not indicate any protective layer between the tree trunk and boards, or how to hold vertical protection boards in place. Even with appropriate attachment methods added, the detail may provide trunk protection, but doesn't provide the more critical root protection. We'd recommend a line of snow fence generally protecting the zone of the trees to remain, a minimum of 10' from the trunk, as well as more information on how the trees will be protected during installation of the waste water system with an airspace.

### **LANDSCAPE SCREENING PLAN L-1.0** (Comments by Kellie Connelly; Terraink, Inc.)

#### GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. The general approach to landscape screening and the allowance for future planting beds is to maintain a +/- 4' wide plant bed along all buildings, a 4' wide minimum lawn path, and then leave the remaining space for buffer screening. This has resulted in very tight spacing of trees along the property lines, where evergreen screening trees that can ultimately grow to 20' wide will be in conflict with spreading deciduous trees often planted less than 7' away. Along the property lines, we'd recommend consideration of locating the 4'-5' wide minimum lawn path adjacent to the building face, allowing the buffer planting and landscape planting beds to be combined. This would allow residents to view their plantings from their units, while providing much needed space for the buffer screen trees to grow with less intrusion on neighboring properties and both new and existing deciduous trees.  
**Terraink will place a 4'-5' lawn strip adjacent to the Building B north building façade, and at the Building D south building façade in order to widen the landscape screening planting beds and space out the plantings to allow mature spread and growth.**
2. The option of providing screening fencing in addition to evergreen plantings doesn't seem to have been considered. Fencing would significantly help to screen the development, especially at the neighboring property's deck on the south.  
**Owner is considering this option.**

3. Monocultures within screening tree types: To avoid losing all screening trees of a particular tree type, such as the ultimately very tall White Spruce, in the event of a new tree pest, we'd recommend the use of 2 or 3 different species, such as adding in Firs or other evergreens. Existing hemlock at the site seems free of wooly adelgid, so could be considered for scattered locations.  
**Terraink will replace several White Spruces; Picea glauca will be replaced with Leyland Cypress; x Cupressocyparis leylandii in order to increase evergreen diversity within the screen planting.**
4. Grading Contours: This plan includes site grading, but the 10' contours have been turned off in the version received. Please turn on for future submittals.  
**Terraink will show the existing contours as are shown on the Civil Engineering plans.**

#### SPECIFIC COMMENTS – SOUTH PROPERTY LINE:

5. Southeast corner: an existing deciduous tree to remain is indicated, while none is indicated on the Site Preparation plan as remaining. Since existing trees in that corner look to be very tall and narrow, and to possibly be Norway maples, and any tree roots would likely be significantly cut by drain line installation, it may be preferable to provide a new tree here. If there is a desirable tree intended to remain and be protected, it should be clearly indicated on the Site Prep plan.  
**Terraink will place a new Oak Tree; Quercus rubra at the southern property line to replace the existing Norway Maple; Acer platanoides that is invasive and unlikely to survive the utility trenching.**
6. At the SW corner of the Building A parking area, a lawn strip is provided along the parking area. It's assumed that this lawn strip is for snow storage, but there are two deciduous trees within the lawn that would be damaged by piling of snow. Also, the provision of the lawn strip forces the evergreen trees close to the property line, and it's noted that based on the grading plan, any melt of any snow piled in this area would now drain onto the abutting property. We'd recommend eliminating the lawn strip, not allowing snow piling here, and allowing a fuller buffer planting with space for the selected trees to grow.  
**Terrain will remove the lawn strip from the end of the parking area between Building A and Building D, and the landscape screening planting bed will be increased to allow the evergreen tree to be located at the top of the slope.**
7. Related to the Item 4 buffer planting, two spruce that will ultimately get to be 10'-20' wide are shown just a few feet off of the property line, so will extend over the property line. Unless requested by the abutters, we'd recommend shifting the trees to the north to more comfortably fit the space available.  
**Terraink will shift the proposed trees away from property line as much as possible given the site constraints.**
8. Related to the Item 4 buffer planting, along Building D several spruce have been indicated under the canopies of existing trees to remain, as close as 7' away from one trunk. Shifting/eliminating the lawn strip would allow these trees to be pulled out from under the canopies.  
**Terraink will shift the proposed trees away from the existing trees to allow room for mature spread and growth.**
9. Recommend changing two RC – Rhododendron carolinianum shown right at the corner of existing abutter's stairs up slope from their deck to be R. maximums 6'-7' ht. The Carolinas are fairly small and slow growing, and wouldn't provide needed screening at this critical spot. Three R. maximums would provide a more consistent screen. (Rather than adding, consider switching with RMs currently up near the retaining wall.)  
**Terraink will switch the (2) Rhododendron carolinianum to be (2) Rhododendron maximum.**

- Existing trees to remain: as noted in the Site Preparation plan discussion, trees to remain are not completely clearly indicated. There are existing trees at the SE corner of the upper parking area that are shown as remaining on the Landscape Plan. These should be clearly shown as remaining on the Site Prep. Plan as well.

Terraink and DEI will coordinate the DEI Site Preparation Plan and Terraink Landscape Screening Plan regarding the existing tree.

#### SPECIFIC COMMENTS – WEST AND NORTH PROPERTY LINES:

- Oak tree at entry drive: confirm safe sight distance. It may be recommended to shift tree a bit further from corner.

Terraink will adjust the location of proposed Oak tree to assure safe sight lines.

Both deciduous and evergreen trees appear to be crammed very close together along the north west property line, and as they mature the canopies will be in conflict and will extend over the abutting property. Strongly recommend switching the locations of the lawn strip and the 'foundation' planting allowance to provide a more adequate width for buffer plantings, as discussed in Item 1 under General.

Terraink will place a 4'-5' lawn strip adjacent to the Building B north building façade in order to widen the landscape screening planting beds and space out the plantings to allow mature spread and growth.

- Reconsider the use of Spruce trees opposite the south face of the abutting residence, as their rapidly reached mature height of 40'-60' will keep the house in shadow. Unless requested by the abutter, we'd recommend only the Red Cedars or other evergreen that stays 15'-20' max at maturity in this area.

Terraink will replace several White Spruces; *Picea glauca* will be replaced with Leyland Cypress; x *Cupressocyparis leylandii* in order to increase evergreen diversity within the screen planting.

- NE corner of the Building C parking area: while the 2' wide space is tight, a single line of daylilies between the parking lot and the property line will provide no buffer and is not adequate. Provide a screen of shrubs, not perennials. Note that unless the planting width is increased, snow may not be pushed into this area as it would fall to the abutter's property. Also note that the parking layout seems to have changed after the planting plan was done, and there is a Rosebay Rhododendron (RM) shown on the curb line.

Terraink will incorporate the new DEI parking layout and substitute the proposed day lilies with multiple Rhododendron maximum.

- Provide some screening evergreens along Building C. Current plan would leave this open to the abutting property in winter. (Shift trees discussed below.)

Terraink will incorporate a few White Spruce, *Picea glauca* to provide more screening along Build C.

- Building E buffer: two spruce trees that will reach 40'-60' are shown directly under a large tree to remain and replace with a shorter screening evergreen species. (Consider shifting the spruce trees to be along the north face of Building C.)

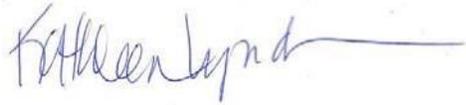
Terraink will shift the proposed trees away from property line as much as possible given the site constraints.

- NE of Building E: Recommend shifting the sugar maple 8-10 feet to the south. This is shown as only 12' from a new spruce, and there is room to shift it to allow its canopy to develop.

Terraink will shift the proposed Maple tree to ensure enough space for the growth of the proposed spruce.

If you have any questions or comments please call Ken Staffier at 617-607-2163, or me at 617-607-2905.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathleen Lynch" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Kathleen Lynch, RLA

Senior Landscape

Architect [klynch@vhb.com](mailto:klynch@vhb.com)